



The Aeronautical Newsletter of the
Seattle Flight Standards District Office

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www.faa.gov/fsdo/seafsd

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MOUNTAIN FLYING CLINIC

Nation wide, the number one cause of fatal general aviation airplane accidents is "Continued VFR into Deteriorating Weather." But in the seven northwestern states (not including Alaska) the number one cause of fatal general aviation airplane accidents is "Density Altitude." What we need is a good mountain flying clinic.

Washington State DOT, Aviation Division will again be hosting their Mountain Flying Clinic Saturday and Sunday, September 7 and 8, 2002. Wings of Wenatchee at Pangborn Field, Wenatchee, WA will be the site for this valuable training.

The training consists of a two hour mountain flying briefing and a two hour mentored flight training sortie through the surrounding mountains. ***To participate as a pilot, you must be current and qualified to act as pilot in command because you will be the pilot in command and your mountain flying mentor will not!!!***

Additionally, there are optional safety seminars on a variety of aviation subjects planned for both days. Pilots and non-pilots alike will find value in these sessions.

Although you must be a Washington State registered pilot to participate, there is no charge for the

training (you must provide the aircraft).

If you wish to attend, contact the Aviation Division at 360-651-6300 or 1-800-552-0666 to register. You will need to pick a date (Saturday or Sunday), and specify the type of aircraft you will be flying so arrangements can be made for the appropriate routes and mentors.

WINGS OVER THE SAN JUANS

WINGS is the commonly used name for the FAA's Pilot Proficiency Awards Program. With WINGS, pilots are encouraged to attend a safety seminar and get three hours of refresher flight training from the instructor of their choice. You will be rewarded with a set of wings which will remind you of military flying wings.

Additionally, WINGS is considered a replacement for the BFR. And there are insurance companies who will give you a break for completing WINGS because there is no doubt that those who complete refresher training on a regular basis are better risks than those who do not.

On Saturday, September 14, the folks at Rugby Aviation on Orcas Island will be hosting a WINGS event. They will be putting pilots who wish to complete WINGS together with flight instructors who

have volunteered to provide 3 hours of flight instruction at no cost to the pilots (you must provide the airplane). We encourage participating pilots to consider tipping their volunteer flight instructors.

At this event, you can show up, attend a seminar, get the refresher flight training, and wear your Wings home. ***To participate as a pilot, you must be current and qualified to act as pilot in command because you will be the pilot in command, and the instructor will not!!!***

Maintaining the ratio of pilots to flight instructors is critical, so ***PRE-REGISTRATION IS MANDATORY!!!*** Whether you are a pilot looking for training or a flight instructor willing to volunteer, please contact Frank Cantwell at 360-376-7139.

Rugby Aviation is located inside Island Aircraft Services at the southwest corner of the airport. Aircraft parking is on the east side of the airport, primarily on grass. Some limited tiedowns available.

TEMPORARY FLIGHT RESTRICTION UPDATE

We are **absolutely delighted** to report that unauthorized TFR penetrations are virtually non-existent in Western Washington. During January and February we were experiencing about 3 per

week. Then the word got out and now we are only having about 1 per month. And typically, the one per month is happening to someone who is visiting Western Washington from afar. You local pilots are doing a GREAT job!!! Congratulations, and thanks!

The EAA Fly-In was a major concern due to pilots visiting the area from all over America. Technically speaking, there were no TFR violations during the Fly-In. However, the day before the Fly-In, a pilot who lives outside Western Washington departed from the Arlington Airport and two minutes later penetrated the Everett TFR unauthorized. Still, only one during such a major event is remarkable. Compare that to the TFR at Camp David which experienced 16 unauthorized TFR penetrations during one month this summer!

Here comes some news you'll like. Well, you might not like it a lot, but you'll like it. Washington DC has reduced the penalty for unauthorized TFR penetrations. Pilot certificates are now being suspended for only 30 to 90 days. At the end of their sentences, pilot certificates are automatically returned in the mail, no additional action required on the part of the pilots.

PILOT ATTITUDE SURVEY

No doubt you've heard it said that the most dangerous part of the flight is the drive to the airport. That is absolutely true, but only if you are driving to an airport served solely by major U.S. air carrier airlines. Unfortunately, if you are driving to the local general aviation airport, the drive to the airport is, **by far**, the **safest** part of the flight. We don't mean to shatter any bubbles, but in order to attack the

problem, you must first understand just exactly what the problem is.

Some of you can probably remember about a year and a half ago at seminars at the PUD Building in Everett, and at the Museum of Flight, filling out a pilot attitude survey passed around by Dale Wilson, Associate Professor of Flight Technology at Central Washington University. Dale would like to thank all those who participated in the study. The following article is based on a paper which was presented at the International Symposium on Aviation Psychology in March 2001, and is available online on the author's home page at:

www.cwu.edu/~flight/faculty_wilson.html

The article seems to provide some insight into the problem.

VFR flight into IMC: "It won't happen to me--and if it does I can get out of it!"

That's the sentiment of the majority of VFR pilots who were asked what their chances were of experiencing an accident due to inadvertent flight into instrument meteorological conditions (IMC). A questionnaire administered to pilots enrolled at Central Washington University's Flight Technology program and to over 100 pilots attending two FAA aviation seminars in Seattle, asked participants to rate their chances of experiencing an accident due to inadvertent VFR flight into IMC and their ability to avoid or successfully fly out of such conditions. Results indicate that a significant majority believed they were less likely than others to experience a VFR-into-IMC accident and were more capable than others at both avoiding and successfully flying out of IMC. These findings corroborate earlier research that found most general

aviation pilots believe they are safer, possess greater flying skill, are less likely to take risks in flight, and are less likely than their peers to experience an aircraft accident.

Pilots aren't the only ones who exhibit unrealistic optimism (*optimistic bias*) and an overestimation of their abilities (*ability bias*). For example, most cigarette smokers believe they are at less risk of developing smoking-related health problems than the average smoker and most drivers believe they are less likely than the average driver to be involved in an automobile accident. Also, most Americans believe they are more intelligent than their fellow citizens; over 90% of U.S. college professors think they do *above average* work; and 93% percent of U.S. drivers rated themselves as more skillful than the average driver!

All of us can't be above average nor have a lower-than-average chance of experiencing an aircraft accident, yet that is what most of us believe. Why is that. These two biases are part of a family of what are called *self-serving* biases that serve to protect our ego by painting an unrealistic positive view of ourselves. In fact, the strength of these biases is significantly reduced in mildly depressed people and those with lower self-esteem, and compared to so-called mentally healthy individuals, research indicates these people actually exhibit more accurate and realistic perceptions of reality! There is also considerable evidence supporting a link between a positive, optimistic approach to life and reduced susceptibility to physical illnesses as well. The catch-22 is the very biases which likely cause pilots to be overly optimistic regarding their chances of experiencing a VFR-into-IMC accident and overconfident in their ability to avoid or successfully fly

out of IMC, also seem to be crucial for good physical and mental health!

Aircraft accidents resulting from attempted VFR flight into IMC continue to be one of the leading causes of fatalities in aviation--especially for those of us who fly here on the west coast where moist Pacific air flows into mountainous terrain leaving us with few options to safely get to our destination. Obviously there are many complex and often unconscious factors that influence our decision to press on into deteriorating weather, including *get-home-itis* and the influence other people may have on our decision-making. (By the way, did you know that over a recent eight-year period a significantly higher percentage of VFR-into-IMC accident flights carried passengers on board compared to other U.S. aircraft accidents?)

Optimistic and ability biases are only two of the many factors that influence our decision-making. You've probably noticed these two biases correspond to the hazardous thought patterns of *invulnerability* ("it won't happen to me") and *macho* ("I can do it"). Even though these thought patterns might actually be good for our overall physical and mental well being, the flip side is they can indeed be *hazardous* when it comes to estimations of risk and our own flying ability. To reduce our risk we need to recognize that our decision-making is not always rational and that the normal biases we all experience could get us into trouble. If and when we find ourselves uncomfortable about the weather we're flying in, we need to realize that we are probably already biased to continue the flight! We need to trust our intuition knowing that if it doesn't feel

right it probably isn't. If in doubt we need to wait it out!

Editor's note: A recent look at 10 days' worth of aircraft accidents across America (July 20 through 29) showed 86 total accidents. The results are predictable: 45 landing (the inability to make an accuracy landing, improper flare and touch-down, loss of control due to cross wind, or gear up landings), 22 loss of power (most due to fuel mismanagement) 1 takeoff, 1 density altitude, 1 stall/spin, 2 VFR into instrument conditions, 2 fire in flight, 2 unwarranted low flight, 2 mechanical malfunctions, 1 airline hit turbulence with passengers not belted in. You can do similar studies by accessing:

www.faa.gov/avr/aai/iirform

These are the kinds of situations every one of us must be prepared to handle. You are the only one who can accurately judge if you are truly prepared. Please make sure you do an honest evaluation of your currency, skills, and abilities.

CFI CARE

The Washington DOT, Aviation Division will host a CFI Refresher Clinic on September 14-15, 2002 in Spokane. The two-day clinic will be held at the Spokane International Airport Ramada Inn.

The clinic is for CFIs who are currently registered pilots with the state of Washington. The clinic is offered free of charge. Certificates expiring in September, October, November, and December 2002 may be renewed at the clinic with no change in expiration month.

For more information and/or to register please call the Aviation Division at 360-651-6300 or 1-800-552-0666.

LOOKING FOR A WINNER

We have all had a flight instructor who got us started, and maintenance technicians who keep our aircraft airworthy. If you have one who has done a great job for you, the time has come to nominate them for CFI of the Year and/or Maintenance Technician of the Year. Local winners will be selected from western Washington State, with the awards presentations being made at the Northwest Aviation Conference in February. The winning local entries will compete with entries from the seven northwestern states to select a regional winner. The winning regional entries will be entered in the national finals.

The process is simple. No later than November 15, 2002, submit a nomination package to Scott Gardiner at the Seattle Flight Standards District Office. The package should include a resume of the applicant's professional accomplishments, and an essay (1,000 words or less) explaining why your applicant is deserving of this award. Letters of recommendation pertinent to the type of award, and supporting documentation such as magazine, newsletter, and newspaper articles, etc. (a maximum of ten) can also be included.

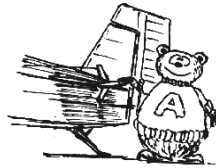
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FAA Airman Certification Branch
Box 25082
Oklahoma City, OK 73125

AEROSAFE

May you always find VFR and tailwinds



A Bearly Able Publication